



Department of Justice

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Eastern District of California

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MADERA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO DISTRIBUTING AND RECEIVING IMAGES DEPICTING THE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF MINORS

FRESNO, Calif.—Acting United States Attorney Lawrence G. Brown announced today that on February 20, 2009, PETER RALPH OHANIAN, 58, of Madera, Calif., pleaded guilty before United States District Judge Lawrence J. O'Neill to distributing and receiving visual depictions of the sexual exploitation of minors.

This case is the product of an extensive investigation by the FBI Cybercrimes Task Force in Fresno. The Task Force is comprised of the FBI, the U.S. Secret Service, California Department of Justice, the Fresno Police Department, and the Fresno Sheriff's Department.

The investigation in this case was undertaken as part of Project Safe Childhood (PSC). PSC is a United States Department of Justice initiative established to increase federal prosecutions of violent sexual predators of children, and to reduce the number of Internet crimes against children including child pornography trafficking. As a part of PSC, the United States Attorney's Office has teamed with state and local agencies and organizations to increase law enforcement presence on the Internet and to educate the public about safe Internet use, thereby reducing the risk that children might fall prey to online sexual predators. For additional information on the PSC initiative, please go to www.projectsafefchildhood.gov or call the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of California and ask to speak with the PSC coordinator.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Sheila K. Oberto, who is prosecuting the case, OHANIAN admitted, as part of his plea agreement, that on or about February 13, 2008, in Madera County, he used a computer and modem to distribute and receive, via the Internet, visual depictions of the sexual exploitation of minors. The distribution involved material depicting prepubescent minors as well as images of minors engaged in sadistic or masochistic conduct or other violence. The offense involved more than 600 images.

OHANIAN will be sentenced on May 8, 2009 at 8:15 a.m. before Judge Lawrence J. O'Neill. He faces a maximum prison term of 20 years, a fine of up to \$250,000, and a lifetime of supervised release. The actual sentence, however, will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables and any applicable statutory sentencing factors. OHANIAN was remanded into custody following entry of his guilty plea.

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